
HOUSE BILL 1171

State of Washington

57th Legislature

2001 Regular Session

By Representatives O'Brien, Barlean, DeBolt, Edmonds, Quall, Kagi, Edwards, Rockefeller, Keiser, Murray, Lovick, Miloscia, Ogden, Conway, Van Luven, Haigh, Simpson, Campbell, Ruderman, Linville, Schual-Berke, D. Schmidt, Wood and Santos

Read first time 01/19/2001. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to tuition assistance for public school teachers
2 required to take college courses to continue teaching and public school
3 classified instructional staff seeking teacher certification; adding a
4 new chapter to Title 28A RCW; and declaring an emergency.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the quality
7 of the classroom teacher is a pivotal factor in the degree to which
8 students successfully achieve high academic standards.

9 (2) The legislature recognizes widespread concerns about the
10 potential for teacher shortages and finds that classified instructional
11 staff in public schools represent a great untapped resource for
12 recruiting the teachers of the future.

13 (3) The legislature finds that tuition assistance for teachers who
14 are required by state rules to take college courses in order to
15 continue teaching and tuition assistance for classified instructional
16 staff seeking to become certificated teachers will help enhance the
17 quality of teaching and improve student learning.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Any teacher employed in the common
2 school system of Washington who takes a course from a regionally
3 accredited institution of higher education may apply to the
4 superintendent of public instruction for reimbursement of tuition
5 expenses for the course if the teacher took the course in order to meet
6 state continuing education requirements imposed as a condition for
7 continuing to hold a teaching certificate. A teacher may apply for
8 tuition assistance under this chapter only for courses necessary to
9 continue to hold a teaching certificate.

10 (2) For purposes of this chapter, "courses necessary to continue to
11 hold a teaching certificate" means courses which both:

12 (a) Contribute toward the minimum number of continuing education
13 credit hours a teaching certificate holder must earn prior to the
14 earliest date on which the certificate held would otherwise lapse or be
15 subject to nonrenewal due to failure to meet continuing education
16 requirements; and

17 (b) Are taken at least in part for the purpose of meeting the
18 minimum state continuing education requirements necessary to avoid the
19 lapsing or nonrenewal of the certificate or in order to obtain the next
20 required type of certification.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The superintendent of public instruction
22 shall pay teachers who submit a valid application for tuition
23 assistance a reimbursement of the cost of tuition for any course
24 necessary to continue to hold a teaching certificate up to a maximum
25 amount of the average cost of tuition at public baccalaureate
26 institutions in the state of Washington, provided all other
27 requirements of this chapter are also fulfilled.

28 (2) A valid application for tuition assistance for teachers must
29 include, but is not limited to:

30 (a) Documentation concerning the specific course taken, and
31 identification of which portion of state minimum continuing education
32 requirements is fulfilled by the course;

33 (b) College and university grade sheets or transcripts that
34 indicate completion of courses; or if the course was structured in a
35 pass/fail format, whether the applicant received a passing grade; and

36 (c) A signed statement indicating the applicant understands and
37 agrees that any intentional misrepresentation of a material fact on the
38 application subjects the certificate holder to revocation of his or her

1 certificate pursuant to established rules and procedures of chapter
2 180-86 WAC and other applicable provisions.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) Any classified instructional staff
4 employed in the common school system of Washington who takes a course
5 from a regionally accredited institution of higher education may apply
6 to the superintendent of public instruction for reimbursement of a
7 portion of the tuition expense for the course if the classified
8 instructional staff member took the course in order to become certified
9 to teach in Washington public schools. A classified instructional
10 staff member may apply for tuition assistance under this chapter only
11 for courses that are necessary for and applicable to academic credits
12 needed to qualify for a teaching certificate in Washington.

13 (2) The superintendent of public instruction shall pay classified
14 instructional staff who submit a valid application for tuition
15 assistance a reimbursement for the cost of tuition for any course from
16 a regionally accredited institution of higher education that is
17 applicable toward academic credits needed to qualify for a teaching
18 certificate in Washington public schools. The maximum amount of the
19 tuition assistance is the average cost of tuition at public
20 baccalaureate institutions in the state of Washington.

21 (3) A valid application for tuition assistance for classified
22 instructional staff must include, but is not limited to:

23 (a) Documentation concerning the specific course taken, and a
24 description of how the course is applicable toward requirements that
25 must be met in order to receive a teaching certificate in Washington;

26 (b) College and university grade sheets or transcripts that
27 indicate completion of courses; or if the course was structured in a
28 pass/fail format, whether the applicant received a passing grade;

29 (c) A signed statement indicating the applicant understands and
30 agrees that any intentional misrepresentation of a material fact on the
31 application subjects the applicant to:

32 (i) Future revocation of his or her certificate if a certificate is
33 granted; and

34 (ii) An order that may be issued by the superintendent to repay the
35 superintendent any tuition assistance previously provided, with
36 interest.

37 (4) If a classified instructional staff member who receives tuition
38 assistance under this chapter is granted a teaching certificate and

1 does not teach in the common school system of Washington for at least
2 two years within five years of being granted the certificate, the
3 superintendent may seek repayment, with interest, of the full amount of
4 tuition assistance provided, if the superintendent deems repayment is
5 appropriate under the circumstances of a particular case.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** To be eligible to receive tuition assistance
7 under this chapter, an applicant must receive a grade of "B" or better
8 or, in the case of a course structured in a pass-fail format, a grade
9 of "pass."

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) The superintendent of public instruction
11 shall provide a form which applicants may submit to seek tuition
12 assistance under this chapter. The form must be integrated to the
13 extent possible with verification forms already developed by the
14 superintendent to implement existing requirements that certificate
15 holders report how they have complied with continuing education
16 requirements.

17 (2) The superintendent shall provide tuition assistance payments to
18 qualified applicants within ninety days of the receipt of a complete
19 and valid application, subject to the availability of funds
20 appropriated by the legislature for implementation of this program.

21 (3) The superintendent may require applicants to retain records of
22 their application for tuition assistance and any payments received
23 under this chapter. If the superintendent deems that applicants must
24 retain records relevant to the tuition assistance program, the
25 superintendent shall provide timely notification to applicants of such
26 requirements. The superintendent shall maintain records and retain
27 documents related to the tuition assistance program established by this
28 chapter in such a manner that the program may be audited.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** If any provision of this act or its
30 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the
31 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other
32 persons or circumstances is not affected.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Sections 1 through 7 of this act constitute
34 a new chapter in Title 28A RCW.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** This act is necessary for the immediate
2 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
3 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect
4 immediately.

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